



IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY

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Handling Dental Waste

Wastes commonly generated in dental offices include amalgam particles, waste mercury, fixers, developers, x-ray film packets and chemoclave chemicals. Many of these are designated hazardous waste and are subject to special disposal requirements. This guide lists recycling and waste management options for Idaho dentists. There are two main options for managing dental waste:

Hazardous Waste Management Companies

Many hazardous waste management companies offer services to dental offices for common types of wastes including amalgam, mercury, chemicals, and lead. Most offer pick-up services throughout the state. As with all hazardous waste, the generator is legally responsible for any material from the time it is generated onward. Investigate any firm before entrusting it with waste transportation.

Mail-away Services

Most of these companies provide containers, shipping, and recycling services. They can provide packaging requirements & shipping instructions. Contact them for rates and procedures.

Hazardous Waste Management Companies & Services

Able Clean Up Technologies- services most of Idaho	(509) 466-5255
Ada County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program	(208) 577-4736
Chem Safe Environmental- services northern Idaho regularly (service in Boise & Pocatello areas also available)	(509) 968-3973
Environmental Management Solutions- services all of Idaho	(208) 895-0326
Envirotech Systems, Inc.- services northern Idaho (may be contacted about service in other areas of the state)	(800) 922-9395
PSC Environmental Services, WA- services all of Idaho	(800) 228-7872
Safety-Kleen, Boise- services southern and central Idaho	(208) 342-8882
Safety-Kleen, Spokane- services northern Idaho	(509) 928-8353
Specialty Environmental Services- services all of Idaho	(208) 327-9977
Waste Solutions, Inc.- services all of Idaho	(509) 968-9204

Waste Specific Services

Amalgam

Dental amalgam contains both mercury and silver and therefore must be properly handled. It cannot be mixed with biomedical waste because if incinerated, mercury is released into the air. The waste must be sent to a mercury reclaimer or a hazardous waste management company (see list above).

Mail-away Programs

Amalgaway, IN- all amalgam wastes	(800) 267-1467
Bethlehem Apparatus Co, Inc., PA- all amalgam wastes	(610) 838-7034
Dental Recycling of North America, NJ- all amalgam wastes	(800) 360-1001
Dental Refiners, Nevada – offers pick-up services throughout Idaho	(800) 786-1742
Maguire & Strickland Refining, Inc., MN- all amalgam wastes	(800) 486-2858
Mercury Refining Company, Inc.- contact & non-contact amalgam	(800) 833-3505

Elemental Mercury

Mercury may be found in dental offices for use in amalgam. It is very toxic and should be handled with care. Waste mercury should be disposed of through a licensed mercury reclaimer or hazardous waste management company (see list on page 1).

X-ray Fixer

Used x-ray fixer is a hazardous waste due to its high silver content. It should not be mixed with developer or disposed of down the drain. Instead, it can be sent to a silver reclaimer or hazardous waste management company (see list on page 1). Some film companies or photo processing centers will accept the used chemicals for recycling. Another option is to install a silver recovery unit. Check with your vendor for more information.

Enviro-Chem, Inc. accepts fixer through mail-away program

(763) 428-4002

Kodak RELAY Program for Kodak photographic chemicals

(800) 242-2424

<http://www.kodak.com/US/en/corp/environment/>

X-ray Film

Used and unused x-ray film contains silver which should be recycled if no longer needed. Many film suppliers offer recycling programs and may accept unused film. Check with your supplier for more information. If this service is unavailable, most hazardous waste management companies will accept x-ray film (see list on page 1).

X-ray Developer

Spent developer alone can usually be disposed of through the wastewater treatment plan with permission of the wastewater authority. Developer should not be disposed of through a septic system. Never mix fixer with developer. Unused developer and developer that has been mixed with fixer should be handled as hazardous waste.

Lead Foil Packets

Film packets contain lead, a hazardous material that should be disposed of through a metal recycler or as hazardous waste. Many film suppliers accept used foil packets or check with local recycling companies. Some may be willing to work with dentists to recover lead from foil packets or lead aprons.

Mail-away Programs

Amalgaway

(800) 267-1467

Dental Recycling of North America

(800) 360-1001

Enviro-Chem, Inc.

(763) 428-4002

Maguire & Strickland Refining, Inc.

(800) 486-2858

(also accepts dental film)

Sterilant Solutions

Depending on the concentrations or ingredients, many chemical disinfectant solutions may be classified as hazardous waste. Lab tests, MSDS sheets, and vendor information may be helpful in determining the hazardous nature of these wastes. Never discharge sterilant solutions into septic systems, and check with the local wastewater treatment plant to determine if your chemiclave may be disposed of into the sewer system. Consider switching to autoclave or a less toxic solution.

Additional Resources

- www.ada.org American Dental Association
- <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/> Department of Environmental Quality- Follow links under Waste Management to Idaho Recycling Directory
- www.earth911.org/master.asp Earth 911 Environmental Hotline
- www.romic.com Romic Environmental Technologies

Choosing a Waste Management Company

Many smaller facilities opt to use a waste management company to handle and dispose of hazardous waste. When you cannot avoid generating a waste, protect your business by dealing only with reliable waste management companies. No matter how good the waste management company, remember that no one can take away your liability once you have generated a waste, despite advertising claims.

When choosing companies to recycle or dispose of your hazardous waste, ask the following questions:

1. **What wastes are accepted?**
2. **What are the packaging requirements? Are packaging materials provided?**
3. **Does the company have an EPA identification number and the appropriate permits to transport off-site for treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous waste?** Hazardous waste must be recycled on-site or transported off-site for treatment, storage or disposal by a permitted hazardous waste management company.
4. **Is a hazardous waste manifest needed for this shipment?** A hazardous waste manifest may be required with off-site shipments of hazardous waste. A manifest is a multiple carbon copy document that is signed by the waste generator and transporter when the waste is picked up. It is signed every time the waste changes hands. Finally, a representative of the waste disposal or recycling facility signs the manifest. The final copy is then returned to the generator as proof that the waste reached the proper disposal/recycling destination.
5. **Does the company have insurance to cover accidental spills?** Insurance is the first layer of protection for your business in case of an accident resulting in spills, injury, property damage, etc.
6. **What is the cost for services?** If it is a recycling service, do they return or keep your recycled products? Choose among reputable waste management companies for the best deal. Pay for good service not a brand name.
7. **Is the company willing to negotiate a contract that fits your office's needs?** A service schedule that does not fit the needs of a business may result in increased waste generation.
8. **Does the company follow Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements?** Contact the DOT for more information on these requirements. Your waste management company should have copies and procedures to ensure these requirements are met.

NOTE: DEQ is providing this list as a public service only, and does not certify or recommend any contractors on the list. We suggest you thoroughly research a firm's qualifications and history before contracting with it.

Information in this publication is also posted and regularly updated on the DEQ website. If you are aware of available services not included in this list, please notify DEQ's Pollution Prevention Program.

